

# FIRST WOMEN AT JEFFERSON: Oral Histories

The Thomas Jefferson University Archives and Special Collections has conducted oral history interviews with some of the first women to attend Jefferson. The interviews explore how each woman became interested in the sciences or medicine, their time at Jefferson, and where their careers took them after graduate school.

## 1950

### First Woman to Receive a Jefferson Degree SONIA SCHORR SLOAN, MS



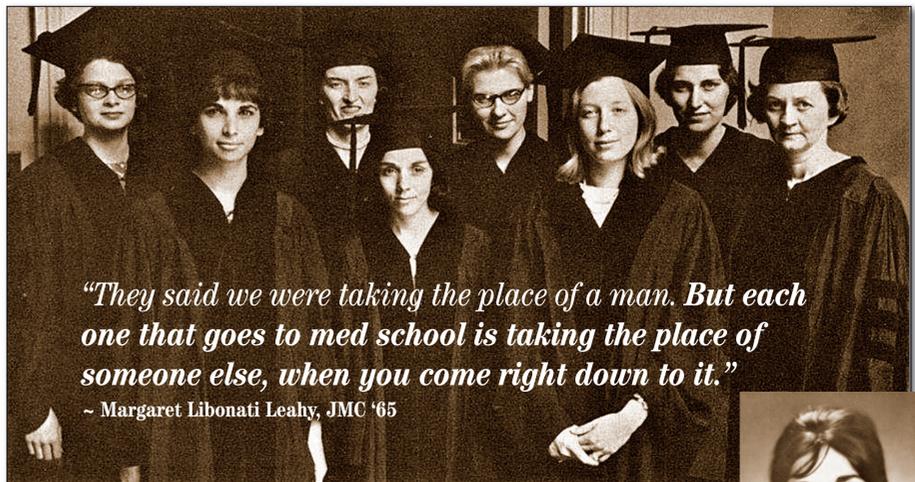
*“I remember coming up on the train from Wilmington and I was just terrified in this man’s world! I was interviewed by Kenneth Goodner, who was the head of the department. And his first words to me were, ‘Why do you want to do this? Why don’t you go get married?’*

*And I said, ‘In due time.’”*

~ Sonia Schorr Sloan, JCGS '50

## 1965

### First JMC Graduating Class to Include Women



*“They said we were taking the place of a man. But each one that goes to med school is taking the place of someone else, when you come right down to it.”*

~ Margaret Libonati Leahy, JMC '65



Margaret Libonati Leahy, MD  
JMC '65

## 1965-1969

### Trailblazers



Merle Gross Salerno Edelstein, MD  
JMC '65

*“I think none of us found any difficulty whatsoever. If anything, I think we enjoyed the status of being nine women in a class with a hundred and fifty some men. It was great.”*

~ Merle Gross Salerno Edelstein, JMC '65



Carolyn Parry Decker, MD  
JMC '65



Kay Ellen Burdette Frank, MD  
JMC '69



Linda Lane Izquierdo, MD  
JMC '69



Bonnie Lee Ashby MD  
JMC '68

*“The first day of anatomy... somebody said, ‘Don’t tell me I have a female lab partner!’ And I turned around and my nose bumped into the belt buckle of my lab partner that I had not yet met. He was six eight. And I’m five four. We stayed together as lab partners throughout medical school.”*

~ Bonnie Ashby, JMC '69

Listen to the full oral histories at:  
[jdc.jefferson.edu/oral\\_histories/](http://jdc.jefferson.edu/oral_histories/)